

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the Specification as specified herein in compliance with 37 C.F.R. §1.121 by replacing the identified paragraph(s) as indicated below. The amended paragraph(s) contain no new matter.

Specifically, please replace the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 6, with the following amended paragraph:

In accordance with further aspects of the present invention, the screw thread extends from the second end of the shaft at least substantially to the first end of the shaft. A screw head can be disposed at the first end of the shaft. A driver bore can be disposed at the first end of the shaft.

Please additionally replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 1, with the following amended paragraph

FIG. 1 is a cross-sectional side view of the furcated bone screw, according to one aspect of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a perspective top view of the furcated bone screw, according to one aspect of the present invention;

FIG. 3 is a perspective illustration of the furcated bone screw in compressed state, according to one aspect of the present invention;

FIG. 4 is a perspective illustration of the furcated bone screw in expanded state, according to one aspect of the present invention; ~~and~~

FIG. 5 is a perspective illustration of two furcated bone screws inserted into a bone, according to one aspect of the present invention;

FIG. 6 is a cross sectional side view of the furcated bone screw, according to one aspect of the present invention.

Please additionally replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 30, with the following amended paragraph:

FIGS. 1 through 56, wherein like parts are designated by like reference numerals throughout, illustrate an example embodiment of a furcated bone screw, according to the present invention. Although the present invention will be described with reference to the example embodiment illustrated in the figures, it should be understood that many alternative forms can embody the present invention. One of ordinary skill in the art will additionally appreciate different ways to alter the parameters of the embodiments disclosed, such as the size, shape, or type of elements or materials, in a manner still in keeping with the spirit and scope of the present invention.

Please additionally replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 8, with the following amended paragraph:

FIGS. 1 and 2 illustrate a furcated bone screw 20 in accordance with the present invention. As illustrated, the furcated bone screw 20 has a first branch 22, a second branch 24, and a third branch 26. However, one of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that there can be any number of branches, ranging from two, to three, to greater than three. The first, second, and third branches 22, 24, and 26 are formed by the creation of multiple elongate slots 28. The elongate slots 28 extend through a portion of the furcated bone screw 20, but do not extend completely from one end to the other of the furcated bone screw 20. **FIG. 6** illustrates the furcated bone screw 20 wherein the first, second, and third branches 22, 24, and 26 are formed by the creation of multiple elongate slots 28 extending for a distance of at least half of the length of the shaft of the bone screw 20 in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention.

Please additionally replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 1, with the following amended paragraph:

Accordingly, the furcated bone screw 20 has the ability to fit through a hole, such as a hole in a plate, and then after passing through the initial opening of the hole, the branches 22,

~~23~~24, and 26 of the furcated bone screw 20 can expand outwardly to fill any void or soft bone space having a larger diameter than that of the hole.